



FROM PAGES TO SCREEN: EXPLORING THE ADAPTATION OF LITERARY NARRATIVES IN DIGITAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the complex processes involved in adapting literary narratives into digital media, with a focused case study on Oscar Wilde's novella *The Canterville Ghost*. The research investigates how narrative elements such as plot, characterization, and thematic structure are transformed during adaptation into visual media like film and animation. By using textual and comparative analysis, the study identifies patterns of change and continuity, and interprets how technological platforms influence the reinterpretation of literary works.

The research emphasizes that digital adaptations offer not merely a reproduction but a creative reimagining that speaks to new cultural and audience contexts. Grounded in adaptation theory and intermediality, this paper offers insights into how screen adaptations preserve, reshape, or challenge the original narratives, contributing to both literary and media scholarship.

KEYWORDS: Literary Adaptation, Digital Media, Narrative Transformation, Oscar Wilde, *The Canterville Ghost*, Qualitative Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The adaptation of literary narratives into digital media formats represents a significant and evolving area of inquiry for scholars across media and literary studies. This process transcends mere translation from one medium to another, signifying a dynamic evolution in narrative practices shaped by technological advancements and cultural shifts.

This study examines how Oscar Wilde's novella *The Canterville Ghost* has been transformed through various screen adaptations, focusing on the narrative shifts, thematic alterations, and audience engagement patterns. The convergence of literature and digital storytelling offers insight into how classic texts are preserved and reinterpreted for contemporary audiences.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation positions such transformations as a process of "repetition without replication." Robert Stam's dialogic model of adaptation emphasizes intertextuality and views adaptations as creative dialogues between source and result.

Further studies, such as Gupta (2023) and Solovei (2023), explore how adaptation reflects cultural, technological, and aesthetic shifts. These scholars argue that adaptations are not derivative but act as a means to renew and reposition narratives within new contexts, making classic stories accessible and relevant to contemporary audiences.

METHODOLOGY

This research follows a **qualitative methodology** based

on textual and comparative analysis. The primary material includes Oscar Wilde's novella *The Canterville Ghost* and its three selected screen adaptations:

- *The Canterville Ghost* (1996) – animated version
- *The Canterville Ghost* (2021) – TV mini-series
- *The Canterville Ghost* (2023) – animated film

Each version was analyzed through close reading/viewing, with a focus on thematic interpretation, narrative structure, and character representation. Adaptation theory and intermediality served as the primary theoretical tools to assess the transformation of narrative elements from text to screen.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed that:

- The **1996 animated adaptation** emphasized redemption and morality, turning the ghost into a sympathetic character.
- The **2021 TV series** introduced socio-political commentary, contrasting American and British cultural values, and adapted the setting and pace to reflect modern sensibilities.
- The **2023 animated film** stylized the narrative for children with fantasy elements like a Grim Reaper and a prophecy, deviating significantly from Wilde's tone.

Across all versions, **Virginia Otis**, the female protagonist, evolved in her characterization, reflecting changing gender expectations and audience needs. The core themes of guilt, forgiveness, and satire were variously interpreted and reshaped.

DISCUSSION

The results underscore that screen adaptations are not bound

by the constraints of fidelity but instead reflect **cultural responsiveness**. Each adaptation creatively reinterprets Wilde's work to match its audience's expectations, technological possibilities, and cultural contexts.

The dialogic nature of adaptations, as suggested by Stam, was evident as filmmakers negotiated the original's satirical tone with contemporary issues, styles, and narrative devices. Adaptation, in this sense, becomes a **collaborative dialogue across time and medium**.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that digital adaptations of literary narratives act as both **preservation and innovation mechanisms**. In reimagining *The Canterville Ghost*, each version opens new interpretive pathways while maintaining some link to Wilde's original ideas.

Through this exploration, it becomes evident that literary adaptations should be viewed as **independent artistic expressions**, not just derivative translations. Future research could examine user-generated adaptations or cross-platform storytelling like video games and immersive VR experiences.

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